

REMARKS

The interview with examiners Thomas A. Morrison and David Bollinger on November 30, 2005 is acknowledged with appreciation. The examiner's interview summary is accurate as to what transpired at the interview.

The 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, rejection of claim 1 was discussed at it was agreed that the recitation of "sheets" in claim 1 is clear in that one of ordinary skill would understand the meets and bounds of the claimed sheet feeding apparatus. The claim has been amended to provide proper antecedent for "said creeper belts" and to clarify the "singular apparatus drawing sequential lead sheets from the stack." The phrase "minimized pressure" is clarified to recite "separating advancing sheets thereof so that the lead sheet is maintained at minimized pressure." This is clearly supported in the disclosure at, for example, page 10, line 5 to page 11, line 6. The prior art of record was discussed and it was agreed that the sheet feeding apparatus of claim 1 comprising a sheet feeder having a feed table including stack advancing creeper belts, upper edge paper guides for maintaining upper edges of advancing sheets in the stack and separating advancing sheets thereof so that the lead sheet is maintained at minimized pressure, a singulator apparatus, a controlled sheet path gap assembly including a plurality of transport ramps for directing sheets through a controlled gap and a transport including a second sheet receiving input is not taught or suggested by the prior art taken alone or in combination. For example, the prior art of record (e.g., Katou et al., U.S. Publication No. 2002/0014736 and Goliez, U.S. Patent No. 4,928,944) do not teach or suggest edge paper guides for maintaining upper edges of advancing sheets in the stack and separating advancing sheets thereof so that the lead sheet is maintained at minimized pressure. In Katou et al. the upper bill support members 812 do not separate advancing sheets thereof so that the lead sheet is maintained at minimized pressure. Goliez does not make up for this deficiency in the prior art.

In view of the above, it is submitted that claim 1 is in condition for allowance and such action is, respectfully, requested.

If there is any issue remaining to be resolved, the examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned so that resolution can be promptly effected.

It is requested that, if necessary to effect a timely response, this paper be considered as a Petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response with the fee for such extensions and shortages in other fees, being charged, or any overpayment in fees being credited, to the Account of Barnes & Thornburg, Deposit Account No. 10-0435 (39152-94688).

Respectfully submitted,

BARNES & THORNBURG LLP

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard B. Lazarus". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Richard" and last name "Lazarus" clearly distinguishable.

Richard B. Lazarus

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